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JULY

CONAN THE KING™

"KNOW YE, O PRINCE, THAT IN THE AUTUMN OF HIS YEARS, WHEN ORDINARY MEN ONLY LOOK FORWARD TO THE RAVAGES OF OLD AGE, KING CONAN EMBARKED ON THE MOST TURBULENT ERA OF HIS ENTIRE LIFE—" *FROM THE NEMEDIAN CHRONICLES.*

TODAY THERE WAS DARKNESS AT NOON. WHEN THE CLOUDS PASSED, THE COCKS CROWED AT THE NOONDAY SUN.

DROUGHT DESTROYS OUR CROPS. OUR VINEYARDS HAVE WITHERED IN THE SUN. WELLS RUN DRY AND FIELD ANIMALS DIE OF THIRST.

AND NOW THIS. NEVER HAVE THE ASHES HELD SUCH PORTENT OF DOOM. MITRA IS DISPLEASED AND CAN ONLY BE APPEASED BY A *SACRIFICE*.

STORY- DON KRAAR
PENCILS- M. SILVESTRI
INKS- ART NICHOLS
LETTERS- JANICE CHIANG
COLORS- GEORGE ROUSSOS
EDITOR- LARRY HAMA

The Sleeping Lion

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DEEP WITHIN THE TEMPLE OF MITRA IN TARANTIA...

IT HAS BEEN ASKED OF YOU BEFORE AND YOU HAVE REFUSED. NOW, THE SIGNS OF IMMINENT DISASTER CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED.

WILL YOU, O KING, *PURGE* OUR LAND OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE FALSE GOD, *ASURA*?

LET THIS BE THE END OF IT.

DEXITHEUS, I AM SICK OF YOUR BIGOTRY AND INTOLERANCE AS I AM OF YOUR SOOTHSAYING. I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE--TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF IT.

I'VE DECREED IN THE PAST THAT THE FOLLOWERS OF ASURA ARE UNDER MY PROTECTION THROUGHOUT MY LIFETIME AND I WILL NOT GO BACK ON MY WORD.

AND IF MY SON, CONN HAD LIVED, HE WOULD HAVE HONORED MY PLEDGE TO THEM, AS WELL.

THEN WE WILL WAIT PATIENTLY UNTIL YOUR SUCCESSOR DECREES THE WORSHIP OF MITRA AS THE OFFICIAL STATE RELIGION, TOLERATING NO OTHERS.

THEN I HOPE YOUR PATIENCE SERVES YOU WELL, *CRASSUS*, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT-- *BY CROM!*

AT THE ROYAL PALACE IN TARANTIA...

I'VE ALREADY LISTENED TO ONE PROPHECY OF DOOM TODAY, ZENOBIA.

PLEASE, MY HUSBAND, LISTEN TO HADRATHUS. HE'S PROVEN TO BE A GOOD FRIEND OVER THE YEARS.

CONAN, MY KING, THE LOVE THE FOLLOWERS OF ASURA BEAR YOU COMPELS ME TO SPEAK. YOU HAVE PROTECTED US FROM PERSECUTION AND WE WOULD MAKE ANY SACRIFICE FOR YOU.

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE, HADRATHUS, I WOULD HAVE LOST MY CROWN AND MY LIFE TWENTY YEARS AGO.

SPEAK, MY FRIEND, AND I WILL LISTEN.

AS PRIEST OF ASURA, I HAVE HELD THE JEWEL KNOWN AS *THE HEART OF AHRIMAN* IN TRUST FOR YOU. IT WOULD BE WELL IF YOU MADE USE OF ITS POWERS NOW.

MY LIEGE, THE SIGNS ARE UNDENIABLE. FAMINE AND WAR HOVER ON THE HORIZON AS SURE AS THE DAWN WINDS PRESAGE THE SUNRISE.

WELL, FOR ONCE, THE PRIESTS OF MITRA AND ASURA AGREE ON SOMETHING. BUT, I WANT NO PART OF *THE HEART OF AHRIMAN* OR ITS SORCERY.

WHATEVER DESTINY HOLDS FOR US, I WILL BE THE MASTER OF MY OWN FATE.

THE NEXT MORNING IN THE ORISKONIE PROVINCE, WESTERMARCK ON THE NORTHEASTERN FRONTIER, ALONG THE SOUTH-WESTERN BANK OF THE BLACK RIVER, WHICH DIVIDES AQUILONIA FROM THE PICTISH WILDERNESS...

WHY DO YOU WORK SO HARD, FATHER?

I COULD STOP WORKING, IF I CHOSE TO, BUT WE'D FIND STARVING TO DEATH MUCH HARDER THAN THIS.

HOLD THE OX, SON. WHILE I MOVE THIS ROCK.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, FATHER? YOU LOOK SO PALE.

THE BIRDS HAVE STOPPED SINGING...

BUT, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

COME HERE, SON.

LISTEN AND KEEP QUIET. I WANT YOU TO GO BACK TO THE HOUSE, NOW. *WALK*, DON'T RUN. AND DON'T LOOK BACK.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK FROM THE FIELDS SO EARLY?

GET BACK IN THE HOUSE, WOMAN.

WHAT'S THE MATTER? I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LIKE THIS BEFORE.

GET BACK IN THE HOUSE AND DON'T SCREAM.

NO... OH, NO...

GET INSIDE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

O MITRA, MAKE US WORTHY AND IF IT PLEASES YOU, PREPARE TO RECEIVE OUR SOULS...

DEATH! DEATH TO THE AQUILONIANS!

... AND FROM THE FURY OF THE PICTS DELIVER US!

THE BLACK RIVER FORTRESS, THE STRONGEST BASTION IN THE STRING OF OUTPOSTS THAT GUARD THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER OF AQUILONIA...

IT'S THE PICTS, I TELL YOU, THOUSANDS OF THEM! THEY'VE CROSSED THE BLACK RIVER AND THEY'RE LAYING WASTE TO THE ENTIRE COUNTRYSIDE!

I SAW THEM BUTCHER MY NEIGHBOR AND HIS FAMILY! MITRA HELP ME, THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO...

LOOK, CAPTAIN LEONTES, SMOKE! THEY'RE BURNING EVERY FARM AND SETTLEMENT FOR MILES.

AND THEY'RE SURROUNDING US.

WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE REINFORCEMENTS TO HOLD THEM OFF.

SOLDIER, RIDE FOR TARANTIA, NOW. YOU'LL KILL MORE THAN ONE HORSE BEFORE YOU GET THERE.

TELL KING CONAN FACE TO FACE WHAT YOU'VE SEEN, AND DON'T STOP UNTIL YOU'RE IN HIS PRESENCE.

YES, CAPTAIN. I'LL REACH THE KING OR DIE TRYING.

LOOK AT IT, THE WORK OF A LIFETIME GOING UP IN SMOKE. FOR YEARS THE PICTS HAVEN'T DARED TO CROSS THE RIVER IN FORCE. WHY NOW?

KING CONAN WILL MAKE THEM PAY FOR THIS. I ONLY HOPE I LIVE TO SEE IT.

GET THEM TO STEP, LIVELY! SOLDIER! THE GATES MUST BE CLOSED!

CAPTAIN LEONTES...

PICTS... THOUSANDS OF THEM! I NEVER DREAMED THERE WERE SO MANY!

SHOOI DINJ MUST HAVE UNITED ALL THE PICTISH TRIBES. HE AND KING CONAN HATE EACH OTHER FOR A HOST OF OLD SCORES. SOON, THEY'LL SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES ONCE AND FOR ALL.

CLOSE THE GATES!

LISTEN TO ME AND DON'T PANIC! THE PICTS ARE NO MORE THAN SAVAGES. THEY AREN'T EQUIPPED TO LAY SIEGE TO THIS FORTRESS.

THEY'RE FAR TOO PRIMITIVE TO BUILD THE KIND OF SIEGE EQUIPMENT THEY'D NEED TO BREACH THESE WALLS.

SO, WE'LL WAIT UNTIL REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE TO DRIVE THEM BACK ACROSS THE RIVER.

CAPTAIN LEONTES, LOOK!

BY THE BLOOD OF MITRA, WHAT DEVILMENT IS THIS?

CATAPULTS... SIEGE TOWERS... AND A BATTERING RAM? WHO BUILT THEM? WHO SHOWED THEM HOW TO USE THEM, CAPTAIN?

THE QUESTION IS NOW LONG CAN WE HOLD OUT, NOW?

ON THE FOREST ROAD THAT LEADS TO TARANTIA...

HEEEEE-YAH!

YOUR HORSE IS SWIFT, AQUILONIAN, BUT NOT SWIFT ENOUGH!

MITRA GIVE ME STRENGTH...

LET HIM DIE SLOWLY HE WON'T GET FAR WITH THAT ARROW IN HIM.

THAT WAS NOT A THRANTA [illegible] ENTERTAIN THE [illegible] OF THEIR NEW [illegible]

WE WANTED TO [illegible] WE [illegible] MAKE [illegible] BUT [illegible] GENERAL [illegible]

IF THE MERCENARY [illegible] THAT WE HELP [illegible] TRIBE WE SHOULD ATTACK THE [illegible] THEMSELVES [illegible] WE WILL BE MORE TO [illegible] OUR FRONTIERS

CHAINED ZINGARAN [illegible] SEEM LIKE [illegible] FOR SUCH WARRIORS.

KUAGA, MY AESIRIANS LONG TO TASTE BATTLE AGAINST A WORTHY ENEMY, TOO BUT, FOR THE [illegible] LET US ENJOY OUR [illegible] HOSPITALITY

O QUIRRN THE MEN OF [illegible] TO BE TESTED AGAINST A GREAT ENEMY

MY [illegible] WE HAVE MUCH ENTERTAINMENT!

MY [illegible] LONG FOR BATTLE AS WELL... BUT EAMON'S RIGHT, KUAGA. WE'LL FIND ENEMIES ENOUGH TO KILL. BY CROM!

HAVE I HEARD THAT YOU HAVE [illegible] YOU WERE [illegible]

THESE STROLLING PLAYERS HAVE JOURNEYED FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, O KING. NOW THEY BEG US TO DAZZLE US WITH THEIR ILLUSIONS.

LET THEM SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, PUBLIUS.

GREAT KING, I AM CALLED RUFIO, ONCE COURT JESTER TO THE LATE KING AECHIDES OF CORINTHIA, AND THIS IS MY HUMBLE ASSISTANT...

WE HOPE OUR HUMBLE EFFORTS WILL GIVE YOU PLEASURE, O KING.

THE KHITAIN ACCENT IS GOOD, BUT DON'T OVERDO IT.

NOW, I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT THIS COURT HAS BEEN PLAGUED WITH MELANCHOLY.

I HAVE A MEDICINE FOR MELANCHOLY GUARANTEED TO CHASE YOUR SORROWS TO THE FOUR WINDS IT BEGINS WITH GESTICULATION, SLEIGHT OF HAND, A MAGIC WORD OR TWO, SUCH AS. .

...SUPERPRESTI-DIGITATION-HALLUCINATION...

...CONFLAGRATION-ENDSORROWANDWOE!

AND REVEALS YOUR HEARTS DESIRE

IF THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A JEST, YOU'LL PAY DEARLY FOR IT!

WAIT!

IT'S MAGIC MOTHER BUT IT'S NO ILLUSION

IT'S THE PRINCE-- PRINCE CONN!

IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A MAGICIAN'S TRICK TO CONVINCE ME THAT MY SON IS [illegible] FROM THE [illegible]

I WILL KNOW [illegible] MY SON OR NOT.

[illegible]

FATHER

MY SON AND HEIR!

LONG LIVE THE PRINCE!

WE OWE A SPECIAL DEBT OF THANKS TO THIS JESTER

RUFIO, HOW CAN WE REWARD YOU FOR HELPING? ONLY TO NAME YOUR HEART'S DESIRE.

RUFIO YOU SHALL NEVER WANT FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THIS REALM, CONSIDER IT YOUR HOME.

I TOLD YOU LEORA THE GUNDERL AND AND THE BOSSONIAN MARCHES MUST BELONG TO NEMEDIA! KING XANTAUS HAS AGREED TO IT!

THE KING OF ARGOS TELLS YOU WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR TARASKUS LISTEN TO ME AND YES, I WILL GET A GUARANTEE OF THE SILVER

WELL, KING XANTAUS, BETTER THAT YOU SHOULD JOIN US LATE THAN NOT AT ALL

DON'T RATTLE ME, LEORA. YOU ARE NOT HOLDING ALL THE AND I AM NOT WHO YOUR CAMELS

IF YOU WERE XANTAUS TO BRING YOU TO HER YOU'D LEARN TO PAY HOMAGE TO THE QUEEN OF HIS KNEES.

THE KING OF ARGOS KNOWS HIS MEN. WOMAN NOT QUEEN ANAMA QUEEN

PERHAPS WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT ONE DAY.

DO NOT ANTAGONIZE ME LEORA THE ARMIES OF ARGOS AND NEMEDIA WOULD NEVER FOLLOW A WOMAN INTO BATTLE SO YOU NEED ME WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT.

YES XANTAUS, THE KING OF MEDIA AND THE QUEEN OF OPHIA NEED YOU TO LEAD THE ARMIES OF OUR ALLIANCE IN THE FIELD

NOW TELL THIS AMAZON THAT THE GUNDERLAND AND THE BOSSONIAN MARCHES ARE MINE!

YES KING TARASCUS THE SECOND, *NOW IS* YOUR HEALTH THIS EVENING?

GENTLY NOW, YOUR MAJESTY, REMEMBER YOUR HEALTH.

EQUAL TO HIS MANNER, I DARE SAY

DO NOT TAUNT ME AND DO NOT CONDESCEND TO ME! IN SPITE OF MY YOUTH THE MIND IN THIS FEEBLE BODY IS THE EQUAL OF YOUR OWN.

PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, DO NOT TAX YOURSELF WITH THESE PETTY QUARRELS.

AND YOU SHALL HAVE THEM AS SOON AS YOU BOTH AGREE THAT THE GUNDERLAND AND THE BOSSONIAN MARCHES ARE TO BE MINE!

YES, THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE IF AQUILONIA IS TO BE OURS.

TARASCUS I NEED YOUR MEDIAN CAVALRY IN POSITION IF WE ARE TO STRIKE SIMULTANEOUSLY

PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, DON'T SCREAM, YOU'LL HAVE PALPITATIONS!

LET HIM HAVE THEM, XANTAUS

AS YOU SAY LEORA

BUT, LET ME REMIND YOU THAT BEFORE WE CAN DIVIDE AQUILONIA, *FIRST WE HAVE TO CONQUER IT.*

IF FORTUNE SMILES ON US, THE ASSASSINS THAT WE HAVE PLACED AT COURT IN TARANTIA, MAY ACCOMPLISH THE HARDEST PART AND KILL CONAN FOR US.

IF NOT, THERE IS ALWAYS SHOOZ DINJ AND THE PICTS...

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT CONAN WILL TAKE THE BAIT AND MARCH AGAINST THE PICTS ON THE BLACK RIVER?

BECAUSE CONAN AND SHOOZ DINJ HAVE WAITED *TWENTY-FIVE YEARS* TO HAVE AT IT AND NEITHER OF THEM COULD BEAR TO WASTE AN OPPORTUNITY.

AND WHILE THE PICTS MAKE USE OF THE SIEGE EQUIPMENT WE PROVIDED FOR THEM...

WE WILL WAIT FOR THE SIGNAL FROM OUR ACCOMPLICE IN TARANTIA. AND THEN...

WE STRIKE.

...AT THE HEART OF AQUILONIA.

CONQUEST!

PLUNDER!

ENSLAVEMENT AND DEATH FOR AQUILONIA!

TARANTIA

THAT NIGHT IN WESTERMARCK, THE PICTS HAVE MADE GOOD USE OF THE SIEGE EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY THE CONSPIRATORS

COME, MY BROTHERS, AND LET OUR SPEARS DRINK AQUILONIAN BLOOD!

AQUILONIAN, THE DAY OF YOUR NATION'S GLORY IS OVER!

CAPTAIN, THEY'RE BREAKING DOWN THE INNER WALL

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME NOW

I'VE HEARD WHAT THE PICTS DO TO WOMEN.

WE MUSTN'T LET THEM TAKE US ALIVE

WILL THEY SPARE OUR CHILDREN?

COME NOW, WE MUSTN'T PANIC.

CAPTAIN, PROMISE ME YOU WON'T LET US BE TAKEN PRISONER BY THE PICTS.

I SWEAR THE PICTS WILL NEVER TAKE YOU PRISONER

MITRA FORGIVE ME.

PUT THE NONCOMBATANTS TO THE SWORD!

IT'S TENDER MERCY COMPARED TO WHAT THE P[illegible] DO TO PRISONERS

EVERY MAN AT ARMS SHOULD DO AS MUCH FOR HIMSELF

THROWING YOURSELF ON YOUR SWORD IS NO DISGRACE WHEN THE ENEMY ARE PICTS

A [illegible]

THE [illegible] AT THE FORTRESS ARE THE [illegible]

THE [illegible] DID NOT OUR [illegible] PROVIDED WAS MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY SHAMAN'S MAGIC, MY CHIEF.

NOW WE CAN WIPE OUT EVERY AQUILONIAN OUTPOST ON THE FRONTIER.

THEY CHEATED US, MY CHIEF, THROWING THEMSELVES ON THEIR SWORDS.

THEY WON'T CHEAT ME OF MY FINAL TRIUMPH.

WHEN I STAND OVER CONAN'S BODY AND SPIT IN HIS DEAD FACE!

I'VE WAITED TWENTY-FIVE YEARS FOR IT. SOON, CONAN WILL RIDE OUT TO MEET US...

AND I WILL DEFEAT HIM IN BATTLE--HIS FINAL DEFEAT!

COME, CONAN, COME TO SHOOZ OINJ AND TASTE DEATH!

CHRONICLES OF CONAN THE KING FROLIC WHILE WESTERMARK BURNS

YOU'RE A STRONG YOUNG BUCK, CIMMERIAN.

BUT YOU COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM OLD KING CONAN!

BY CROM, YOU REMIND ME OF ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND STUPID! I DRINK YOUR HEALTH, BOY!

WELL, TROCERO, SOME THINGS AT COURT ARE JUST AS THEY WERE WHEN YOU LEFT.

AVE, PUBLIUS, I SUPPOSE YOU CAN TAKE THE BARBARIAN OUT OF CIMMERIA BUT YOU CAN NEVER TAKE THE BARBARIAN OUT OF THE CIMMERIAN.

YOU'RE DRINKING TOO MUCH, MY HUSBAND.

LET ME SAVOR THE WINE AND OUR GOOD FORTUNE ZENOBIA. TONIGHT I ONLY WANT TO HEAR THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER.

COME, RUFIO, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO TO REWARD YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN BRINGING CONN BACK TO US. YOU HAVE ONLY TO NAME IT.

THEN ALLOW ME TO AMUSE YOU, MY LIEGE.

FAIR ENOUGH, MAKE ME LAUGH.

I'LL SHOW YOU THE FACE OF IGNORANCE AND FOLLY!

DOES IT LOOK FAMILIAR?

NO ONE, BUT, NO ONE SPEAKS TO THE KING OF AQUILONIA THAT WAY.

HE HAS TAKEN A LIBERTY WITH THE KING THAT NO SANE MAN SHOULD.

HIS TONGUE WON'T BE SO SAUCY ON A PILLORY!

SEIZE HIM AND CLAP HIM IN IRONS!

HA HA HA HA

LET HIM GO!

I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN I'VE HEARD YOU LAUGH LIKE THIS, MY HUSBAND!

LET HIM GO, I SAID.

CROM'S BEARD THERE MAY BE SOME WISDOM IN THIS FOOL'S WIT.

YOU HEARD HIS MAJESTY, UNHAND ME, YOU RUFFIANS.

MORE WISDOM THAN YOU KNOW, MY LIEGE THE HYBORIAN KINGDOMS ARE ARMING THEMSELVES FOR WAR WHILE THE LION OF AQUILONIA SLEEPS.

LISTEN TO RUFIO, FATHER

WE'VE TRAVELED ACROSS THE WORLD TOGETHER AND THERE'S MUCH THAT WE COULD TELL YOU

THERE'LL BE TIME TO TALK OF THESE THINGS TOMORROW FOR TONIGHT LET'S CELEBRATE YOUR RETURN

THERE'S MORE WINE, MORE FOOD AND MORE ENTERTAINMENT.

YOUR MAJESTIES, PERMIT US TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES...

WE ARE JUGGLERS OF A RARE ORDER..

...WITH SKILLS TO DELIGHT AND AMAZE YOU.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, RUFIO?

THAT JUGGLER WAS TRYING TO DISGUISE A NEMEDIAN ACCENT. I DON T LIKE IT.

THEN WE D BEST BE ON OUR GUARD.

MITRA S GHOST, THE DOORS HAVE BEEN LOCKED FROM THE OUTSIDE.

FATHER THAT JUGGLER HAS A NEMEDIAN ACCENT

WHAT OF IT MY SON?

DON'T TURN AROUND MY LIEGE, JUST LISTEN TO ME.

NOW!

DEATH TO TYRANTS!

GET DOWN, ZENOBIA!

THUNK

UGH!

WE CAME HERE TO DIE, KING CONAN, AND TO TAKE YOU AND YOURS WITH US!

GET DOWN, MY LADY!

WELCOME TO OUR FEAST, YOU CURS, IT'S MY TURN TO ENTERTAIN YOU!

THIS SHOULD DELIGHT YOU...

AND AMAZE YOU!

THUP

AND I HOPE YOU FIND IT.

...EDIFYING!

MY LIEGE, MITRA BE PRAISED YOU ARE SAFE!

THESE TRA TOROUS DOGS TRIED TO BAR OUR WAY

CONAN, MY KING, A DYING SOLDIER CRAVES AN AUDIENCE WITH YOU ..

HE HAS RIDDEN ALL THE WAY FROM WESTERMARCK MY LIEGE

THEN BRING HIM IN AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT

HIS ORDERS WERE TO SPEAK TO YOU FACE TO FACE, MY KING.

PICTS. THOUSANDS OF THEM. ALL THE TRIBES UNITED UNDER SHOOZ DINJ CROSSED THE BLACK RIVER LAID SIEGE TO THE BLACK RIVER FORTRESS.. THEY HAD SIEGE EQUIPMENT... AGH..

EASY SOLDIER, DON'T SPEAK ANY MORE YOUR KING KNOWS WHAT HE HAS TO DO.

SO SHOOZ DINJ WANTS TO SETTLE OUR UNFINISHED BUSINESS, THEN BY CROM, WE WILL.

ROUSE MY HOST AND BRING ME MY ARMOR! THE LION OF AQUILONIA SLEEPS NO MORE!

WE MARCH FOR WESTERMARCK TONIGHT!

WITHIN THE TEMPLE OF THE TYRANT A TRAITOR AMIDST HIS HORDE OF THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CONAN.

DEAD, MASTER ALL SLAIN BY CONAN AND THE JESTER. THEIR BLADES NEVER TASTED BLOOD

I HAD HOPED FOR BETTER TIDINGS BUT IT IS ENOUGH THAT CONAN WILL EMBARK ON A LONG CAMPAIGN

BUT, CRASSUS MY MASTER, WORD HAS COME FROM WESTERMARK OF THE INVASION OF THE PICTS AND KING CONAN PREPARES TO MARCH FOR THE BLACK RIVER BEFORE DAWN.

NOW GET YOU GONE

YES MASTER

LONG HAVE I POWERFUL SERVITUDE TO THE FALSE GOD MITRA

EVEN WHILE I LABORED IN [illegible] WORSHIP

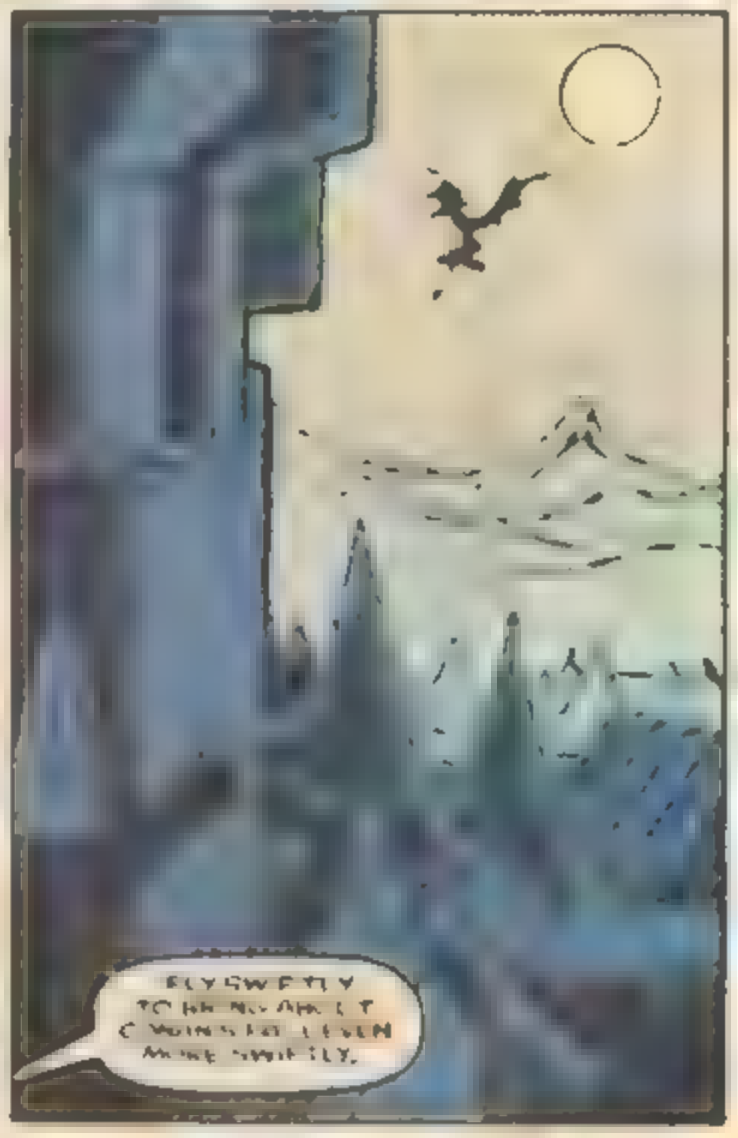
OF THE LIVING GOD

ON SET SERPENT GOD OF STYGIA HAST ME THY HEART

SIGN OF THY FAVOR.

GO AND CARRY
THE NEWS TO OUR
FRIENDS AMONG
THE HUNTERS

MAKE HASTE, YOU
MUST BE AMONG THEM
BEFORE THEM


FLY SWIFTLY
TO BE NO ARROW
CAN OUTSTRIP EVEN
MORE SWIFTLY.

AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE

KING XANTAUS--THE WINGED MESSENGER!

WHAT WORD DO YOU BRING FROM OUR FRIEND CRASSUS THIS TIME?

WHAT NEWS, XANTAUS?

SHOOZ PINJ AND THE PICTS ARE RAVAGING WESTERMARCK LEORA. THE AQUILONIAN ARMY MARCHES TONIGHT

BUT, TARASCUS, YOUR NEMEDIAN ASSASSINS FAILED IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO SLAY CONAN.

BUT, CONAN HAS TAKEN THE BAIT.

AND THAT LEAVES THE ROAD TO TARANTIA OPEN TO U

AY! AND AQUILONIA IS OURS TO GRIND UNDER OUR HEELS.

BEFORE DAWN IN THE ROYAL PALACE AT TARANTIA

AS YOU WISH IT, MY LIEGE

THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN CHOSEN TO COMMAND AT A GLORIOUS TIME, WE AND OTHERS WILL SHARE THE [illegible] IN MY ABSENCE

NOW I WANT SIX LEGIONS ASSEMBLED IN THE TARANTEAN TO MARCH

TRUST ME TO LOOK AFTER MY FAMILY IN MY ABSENCE IF YOU WILL

AS ALWAYS, MY FRIEND

SOON THE PICTS WILL TASTE THE FURY OF THE AQUILONIAN LION AND SHOOZ CUNT AND I WILL SETTLE OLD ACCOUNTS

[illegible]

THEN I'LL ONLY TAKE THREE LEGIONS OF REGULARS THE REST OF MY HOST WILL BE MADE UP OF THE THREE NEW [illegible] LEGIONS. THEY WANTED ACTION? NOW THEY'LL HAVE IT

TELL PALLANTIDES TO SET THE PACE FOR A FORED MARCH OFFICERS CALL WILL BE HELD IN THE SADDLE.

AND TELL RUFIO, THE JESTER, HE'S WELCOME TO JOIN US LAUGHTER IS NEVER MORE PRECIOUS TO MEN THAN WHEN THEY FACE DEATH

MY LORD, WHAT ORDERS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?

LEAVE US NOW, THE QUEEN AND I WISH TO BE ALONE

NO MATTER HOW FAR I AM FROM YOU, NO MATTER HOW LONG, MY HEART WILL ALWAYS BE HERE WITH YOU.

EACH HOUR WILL BE AN ETERNITY UNTIL YOU'RE HERE BESIDE ME AGAIN, MY LOVE.

IF ONLY WE HAD MORE TIME FOR A PROPER "GOODBYE"

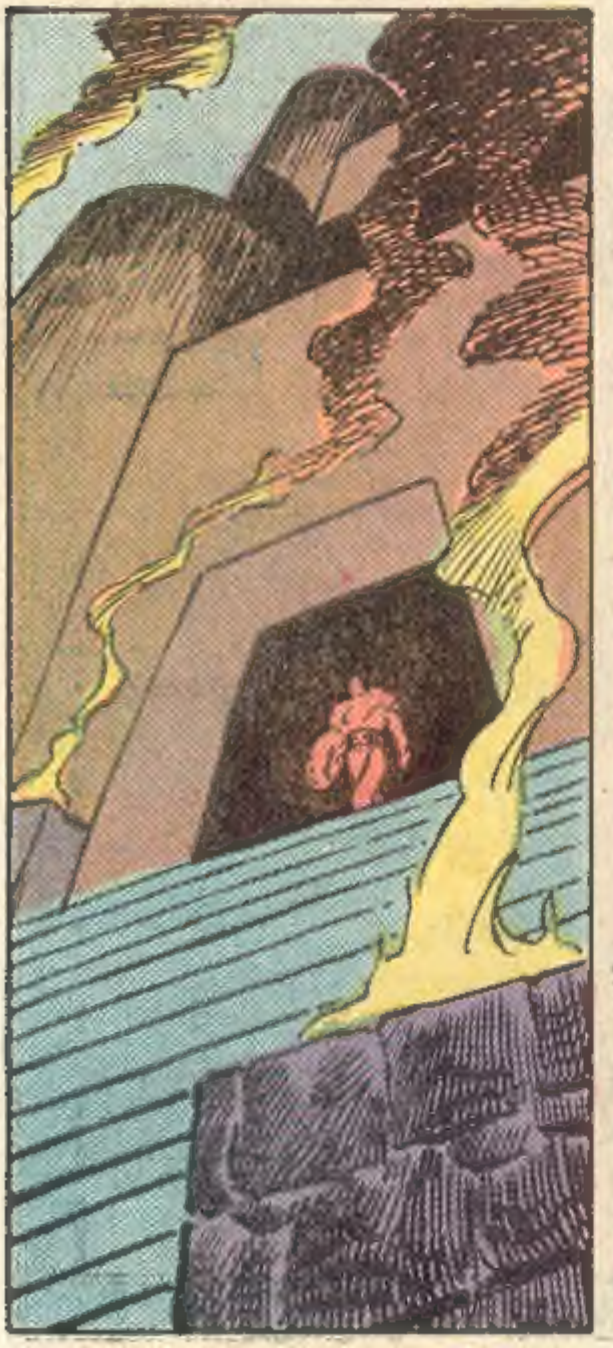
BETWEEN US THERE ARE NO GOODBYES.

I ALWAYS LIKED THE WAY YOU FELT IN MY ARMS.

TAKE CARE, MY LOVE, AND MAY MITRA WATCH OVER YOU

NOW HE HAS WHAT HE'S LONGED FOR MOST THE GREATEST WARRIOR OF THE AGE MARCHES AT THE HEAD OF AN AVENGING ARMY...

. WHILE I WATCH AND WAIT IT'S GOOD THAT HE CAN'T HEAR ME NOW OR HE'D HEAR THE SOUND OF MY HEART BREAKING.



CONAN!

CONTINUED IN ISSUE #30
REVENGE ON THE BLACK RIVER!

KING CONAN

℅ MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

LARRY HAMA
EDITOR
PAT REDDING
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: If you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dear Barbarians,

Ever since issue 20, I have been a faithful reader of Conan the King. Now that's not very long, but with issue 27 I've decided to subscribe to Conan the King. In fact, I'm going to go to my local comic book store and pick up KING CONAN 2-19 (I already have #1). By the way, in issue 1 Roy Thomas wrote an article, "The Making of King Conan, 1932-1980." In it he wrote, I quote, "Who knows? There may yet be a comic-mag called THE SON OF CONAN!" Is there any chance of this happening? I was just curious. Keep up the good work, and till Conan hangs up his sword, make mine Marvel.

Robert Britt
7408 Tanager
Houston, Texas 77079

There currently aren't any plans for a Son of Conan comic, Robert, but we hope you've enjoyed our solo tales of Prince Conn over the past several issues.

Dear People,

Re: KING CONAN #27.

I liked it.

I liked it a lot.

Warren Stone
1723 Strom Street
Parmenter, MA

Dear Conan Creators:

I have been reading Conan comic books for some time now, but since a friend insisted I read an issue of CONAN THE KING (#20), I stopped reading CONAN and picked up CONAN THE KING. After all, why should I read a comic book that shows only the sword-slinging side of Conan, when I can get a comic book that shows more facets of his personality?

CONAN THE KING presents some fascinating stories, especially issue #27 where more problems are presented that Conan will have to face in the near future. Not only is that evil mage still on the loose, but that little boy who owns the ring certainly looks evil to me. I wonder what would happen if that necromancer were to get his ring back?

The way the story connected other CONAN THE KINGs in the past was great. Having the mage peering through time was a nice touch to explain questions that came to mind in previous issues. The subplot with Lysander is going to be very interesting, now that Lysander is the Queen's personal bodyguard.

Since I have only been reading CONAN THE KING for a short time, would you tell me why that mage hates Conan so? Surely Conan must have done something very bad in the past to make this mage cause Conan such grief.

Not to leave off with a question, I wanted to say that CONAN THE KING has been done excellently, and I hope it will continue with the same quality in future issues.

Very Truly Yours,
Michael Caplan
(No Address Given)

The mage has what he considers to be good reasons for his antipathy towards our Barbarian King, but as to what those exact reasons are, thereby hangs a tale (or three) . . .

Dear Marvel,

CONAN THE KING #26 was excellent. I prefer the way you tell the tale of Conan, King of Aquilonia, to what went forth prior to that. You have easily equalled Mr. Thomas in quality on this book in story, while Marc and Geof bring their own easy-on-the-eyes version of the Cimmerian king and his family, friends, enemies, and subjects. Please continue the stories of CONAN THE BARBARIAN. Thank you and good day.

Ciao,
George A. Williams
Rt. 2, Box 217
Angie, LA 70426

Dear Marvel,

I am an avid fan of CONAN THE KING. After issue #26 I was amazed! It was magnificent! First, about Conan: I hope he doesn't leave his kingdom! I loved his Black Dragon tests; they were hilarious!

Now to Conn. I was really sad when he made his half-brother promise not to reveal that he is alive. Because I missed a few issues, I don't understand why Conn hates his father. Could you please explain? Anyway, I hope Conn reaches his father before he does something to dethrone himself.

On to my suggestions, which are few. Why, when he is proficient in so many, doesn't Conan ever use a weapon other than a sword? I also wish you would show when someone begins to hallucinate; I get a little confused sometimes.

As usual, the artwork and plot were spectacular. My compliments to the staff!

One last thing: I sincerely hope that you make CONAN THE KING (in my opinion the best mag around) monthly.

Bobby Anderson
11 Heusted Drive
Old Greenwich, CT 06870

First of all, Conan prefers to use a sword because it's the weapon he's used most often in the past, and is therefore the most comfortable with. Second, Conn hates his father for the very same reason you mentioned about his hallucinations — he's confused. He's under the impression that his father has brought dishonor upon himself and his family by being unfaithful to Queen Zenobia. Naturally, he's confused, hurt, and more than a little angry. The nature of Conn's hallucinations themselves, however, will have to remain our little mystery for the time being.

Dear Conan and crew,

I think Conan the King is great, but I got a little mixed up reading about Conn. Why did Conn not go with his brother to Aquilonia? And why does he not look like Conan anymore? It looks like he got up on the wrong side of the bed. Don't get me wrong — I liked how you gave him a chance by himself, but do something with his head. I liked how you had Trocero go home. Have more of that! I think you should have Conn in his own comic book, please! And I think Conan should pick up his weapons and go on his own again.

Anonymous

In order of the asking . . . 1) Right place, wrong time. 2)Age, individuality, and artistic license. 3)He got up on the wrong side of the world. 4)No. 5)Conan'll pick up his weapons and go off, but not on his own. Rather, with an avenging army. Once a king, never more a lone wolf.

Dear Marvel,

When we refer to the "Black Dragons", let's keep in mind the "Black." So, you'd better let them use the silver mail for parades only. Bring back the black mail.

And fast.

S. Paramithiotis
Athens, Greece

P.S.: Syan-Lin looks like one mean Hyborian-age ninja.

Whatever you say.

Dear Sword Swingers:

I've been reading about the adventures of Conan since I first heard of him, about five years. I would like to congratulate you fine gentlemen on the fantastic work that you have done with his adventures during his kingship. This is the first time that I have written to a comic, and the reason is that no one has ever done anything to cause me to write. You gentlemen have changed that. The marvelous things that you have done with this book are what caused me to write.

One more thing. I happen to know who the "mystery" sorceror is. He is one who has much reason to hate the mighty Cimmerian, and one who derived much of his mystic might from a magic *ring*. Hmmm, it seems to me that the object our sorceror friend was looking for was a *ring*. I am speaking, of course, of none other than . . . THOTH-AMON!!! I've suspected that it was he ever since #23 when he muttered about repaying Conan for the torture of mind and spirit that he endured. You solidified my somewhat vague suspicion in #27 when he spoke of being brought back to life. You see, Conan killed Thoth-Amon a few years back. This sorceror also has a personal vendetta against our favorite Cimmerian.

Also, thank you for a truly enjoyable comic.

P.S.: Do I get a No-Prize?

John (SkullCrusher Jones) Berg
Leavenworth, KS

You do not. Thank *you*.

Next issue:

REVENGE ON THE BLACK RIVER!

Roger Stern's Old-Fashioned Crunchy-Style Bullpen Bulletins

JIM'S NOT HERE . . .

Yep, the world's tallest editor-in-chief is busy being a writer right now (for more on that, see the Hype Box), so he called yours truly and asked me to take over the Bullpen page for this month. Of course, I was flattered, but at first I didn't know if I wanted to take on the added responsibility. After all, I have a couple books of my own to write! (That's the AVENGERS and DOCTOR STRANGE, for those of you who just walked in off the street and decided to sneak a peek at the magazines on the newsstand. Shame on you, anyway! This ain't no library, you know!)

Where was I? Oh, yes . . . "But, Jim," I told him, "I'm busy enough as it is! I haven't even finished sending out all of my 1984 Christmas cards yet!" There was a pause at the other end of the phone, and I heard a slight quaver in his voice, as he said, "Ohhh, puh-leeezzzz, Roger! You can talk about anything you want! You can even have your name in big letters at the top of the page!" I'd heard that quaver before. I knew that at the other end of the line tears were starting to well up in those big blood-shot eyes of his. I never could stand the thought of a 6' 7" editor-in-chief crying, so I caved in and agreed to help him out.

Besides, I always wanted my name in big letters at the top of the Bullpen Bulletins!

FAR ABOVE CAYUGA'S WATERS . . .

Eleven years ago, the Comic Book Club of Ithaca was founded in Ithaca, New York, by a band of intrepid comic book collectors for the express purpose of promoting the collection, preservation, and appreciation of that great American art form, the comic book. And they've been doing just that for over a tenth of a century. So why am I telling you this? Well, for one thing, the members of the Club are nice people who do good works and deserve recognition. But mainly, I wanted to tell you about Ithacon, the convention they have every April. I went to my first Ithacon four years ago, and I had so much fun, I moved to Ithaca! This year's convention is Ithacon-10, and it looks to be the best show yet. It's going to be held at the Ithaca Ramada Inn, April 20th and 21st. I'll be there, along with John Buscema, Terry Austin, Walt and Louise Simonson, Jim Shooter, Richard and Wendy Pini, and many more! For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Ithacon-10
P.O. Box 701
Ithaca, NY 14851

We hope to see you there. (Hey, and tell 'em Marvel sent you!)

JUST TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT. . .

No, I won't tell you who the Hobgoblin is!

AND THEN, THERE WAS THE TIME . . .

You know, the great thing about . . . oh, excuse me! The phone's ringing!

Hello? Oh, hi, Jim! You caught me right in the middle of typing up the Bullpen Bulletins . . . boy, I'm really getting into the swing of this! I never knew this could be so much . . . what's that? I can only fill how many lines? Aw, Jim! I still haven't told about the time I kissed Fred Hembeck's feet . . . or the time you were mistaken for Dave Kingman, back when Kingman was first with the *Mets*. What do you mean, save them for the next time I do the Bullpen Bulletins? Jim? Hello?! Is anybody there?!?

Ahem. Well, it looks like we've run out of space and time . . . which either means we've warped into another dimension, or it's time for me to say good-bye for now. So I will!

See you in the funny papers!

—Roger

HYPE BOX

SECRET WARS II (Limited Series) #1 — The Beyonder has arrived on Earth! The X-Men, New Mutants, Dazzler, Captain America and Iron Man are the first line of defense — and the action continues in most of their own titles next month! Mastermind JIM SHOOTER has written a comics *tour de force*, vividly brought to life by the artistic talents of AL MILGROM and STEVE LEIALOHA! The war has come home!

DAZZLER #38 — The *X-Men* help usher in a new era for this popular super heroine! Join ARCHIE GOODWIN (writer), JACKSON GUICE (inker) and talented newcomer PAUL CHADWICK (penciler) for the celebration!

FRED HEMBECK DESTROYS THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #1 — HEMBECK is on a rampage and no one is safe! Is there a super hero alive who can prevail against his rapier-like wit, his jagged jokes, or his painful puns? Watch for this all-new, double-sized one-time-only extravaganza!

BLACK DRAGON (Limited Series) #1 — CHRIS CLAREMONT and JOHN BOLTON present an intricately crafted tale featuring knights in shining armor, Robin Hood, magic, wizardry and . . . the Black Dragon! Don't miss out on the new heights of graphic excellence in this six-issue EPIC COMICS series!

CHECK LIST

- ☐ **THE THING #25**
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #28** — Guest-starring *Dazzler!*
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #220**
- ☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #4**
- ☐ **GARGOYLE (Limited Series) #2**
- ☐ **CONAN THE KING #29**
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #266**
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #307**
- ☐ **POWER PACK #12** — Special cross-over issue with *X-Men #195!*
- ☐ **MICRONAUTS #10**
- ☐ **INDIANA JONES #30**
- ☐ **DAZZLER #38** — See Hype Box!
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #24** — Special *double-size* issue, featuring "The Final Conflict!"
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #309**
- ☐ **AVENGERS #257**
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #172**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #177**
- ☐ **X-MEN #196** — Special cross-over issue with *Power Pack #12!*
- ☐ **ROM #68**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT #2**
- ☐ **POWER MAN / IRON FIST #118**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #37**
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #280**
- ☐ **IRON MAN #196**
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #104**
- ☐ **DEFENDERS #145**
- ☐ **STAR WARS #97**
- ☐ **THOR #357**
- ☐ **TRANSFORMERS #6**
- ☐ **SECRET WARS II (Limited Series) #1**
- ☐ **ROCKET RACCOON (Limited Series) #2**
- ☐ **THE OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #4** — Find out about everything that happened in *Amazing Spider-Man #85-113!*
- ☐ **FRED HEMBECK DESTROYS THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #1**
- ☐ **DOCTOR WHO #10**

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #112**
- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #26**
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #21** — STARLIN! Hulk! Thing! "The Clash, Part III"

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **EPIC ILLUSTRATED #30** — "Cerebus!" "Cobalt 60!" BYRNE's "The Last Galactus Story" continues! Art by WRIGHTSON, MUTH, JEFF JONES & more!
- ☐ **DREADSTAR & CO. #1** — A newsstand companion to the direct-only smash!
- ☐ **MOONSHADOW #2**
- ☐ **GROO THE WANDERER #4**
- ☐ **BLACK DRAGON (Limited Series) #1** — See Hype Box!
- ☐ **TIME SPIRITS #4** — Special Art Issue with WILLIAMSON, VEITCH, BISSETTE, YEATES, and TOTLEBEN!
- ☐ **SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #1** — Here at last!
- ☐ **COYOTE #12**

STAR COMICS

- ☐ **PLANET TERRY #4**
- ☐ **PETER PORKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-HAM #2** — Meet the *X-Bugs!*
- ☐ **WALLY THE WIZARD #4**
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